

## NETWORK OF ALABAMA ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

### Fiscal Year 2009 Plan

In the late 1970s, Alabama's higher education community responded to Alabama's historical underfunding for higher education by questioning the status quo. One result of these discussions was the adoption of a new strategy to strengthen academic library and information resources. This innovative model, the Network of Alabama Academic Libraries (NAAL), focused on considering individual academic collections as part of a statewide "Alabama Research Collection." This geographically disbursed collection would be available to any student, faculty member, or other researcher, regardless of the geographic location of the user or the needed materials. State funding for NAAL in 1984 heralded a significant shift in state policy to encourage academic institutions to expand their own resources through cooperation.

The Alabama Research Collection began with the creation of a statewide database with holdings records for books and journals held by all NAAL members. This searchable database, hosted on OCLC WorldCat ([www.worldcat.org](http://www.worldcat.org)), provided the foundation to add rapid delivery of materials between libraries, cooperative collection development grants to correct deficiencies in existing collections, and the shared acquisition of expensive unique research-level resources that were beyond the economic capability of any single institution to acquire. These early programs demonstrated that collective action could significantly improve the library services available to Alabama's academic community. The most remarkable accomplishment of these first years was a growing capacity to plan jointly for a common future.

NAAL librarians were among the first to anticipate that libraries would be dramatically changed by emerging technologies, especially delivery of information via the Internet. NAAL was the first statewide library consortium to share Internet access to the newly available electronic research databases. This initiative achieved financial savings but more importantly expanded access to information for all NAAL students and faculty. The success of the Online Content Program became the basis for a NAAL proposal to deliver core library resources for learners in pre-kindergarten through college. NAAL forged partnerships with representatives from many education communities to successfully advocate state funding for this concept. The Alabama Virtual Library, implemented in 2000, continues to assure **equity, economy, and excellence** in the provision of information services for all Alabamians.

In 2001, the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services awarded the first of two National Leadership Grants for NAAL's Digital Content Program. The first enabled NAAL to create *Alabama Mosaic*, a shared portal and digital collection highlighting treasures held by academic libraries and other repositories that document Alabama history. The second grant established the *Alabama Digital Preservation Network* (ADPNet) for the long-term preservation of digital materials created by local libraries and other repositories. Academic libraries and other cultural heritage organizations recognize that hurricanes, tornados, floods, fires, and manmade disasters endanger Alabama's historical record. ADPNet provides a secure, off-site, trusted archive for the growing number of locally-created digital resources.

An increase in state funding for 2008 allowed NAAL to focus on its original charge: improving the quality of information needed for successful graduate education and advanced research. The Advanced Research Database Program was established to advance scientific, medical, and technical research initiatives and to support institutional efforts to advance statewide economic development. NAAL funded three research databases, hopefully the first of many, fiscal year 2009: ***ABI Inform***, ***CINAHL***, and ***MLA International Bibliography***. Additional funding will be needed in fiscal year 2010 to continue these subscriptions and add other research databases.

A collective vision and coordinated action has enabled NAAL to demonstrate significant progress toward accomplishing its primary goal: assuring that Alabama's academic library users attain the information resources needed for their education and research.

For FY2008-2009, NAAL continues its commitment to:

- Expand access to global information,
- Assure access to information resources about Alabama,
- Share academic library resources regardless of where they are held,
- Develop partnerships to expand access to information, and
- Improve library accountability and performance.

The FY2008-2009 Annual Plan details the specific actions that NAAL members will follow to deliver exemplary library services and resources required for a successful educational experience.

## **1. EXPAND ACCESS TO GLOBAL INFORMATION**

- 1.1 Seamless Access to Information Resources: NAAL will continue to advance the vision defined in "An Electronic Gateway to Information: A Virtual Library for the Millennium," to assure academic library users attain seamless access to information resources needed for their education and research.
- 1.2 Advanced Education and Research: NAAL will implement shared online access to information supporting advanced scientific, medical, and technical research and statewide economic development.
  - 1.2.1 Adopt policies to assure faculty and other researchers in NAAL institutions have access to the research publications needed to support advanced research.
  - 1.2.2 Advocate funding to continue development of shared online resources to advance scientific, medical, and technical research initiatives and to support institutional efforts to advance statewide economic development.
  - 1.2.3 Coordinate the selection and funding of shared information resources for the Advanced Research Database Program.
- 1.3 Alabama Virtual Library: NAAL will support the work of the Alabama Virtual Library Council to assure universal access to core education materials and library-based resources regardless of the user's geographical location or economic status.
- 1.4 Online Content: NAAL will evaluate online databases for shared use and negotiate group licenses whenever possible to achieve discounts and improve licensing terms.
- 1.5 Education: NAAL will coordinate training opportunities as needed to assure that library staff and other information users attain the knowledge and skills necessary to support effective and efficient use of online information.

## **2. ASSURE ACCESS TO HISTORICAL ALABAMA RESOURCES**

- 2.1 Access to Historical Materials: NAAL will coordinate a statewide program to identify and digitize traditional scholarly materials held uniquely by NAAL institutions and other repositories to make these electronically accessible to Alabama residents as well as scholars throughout the world.
  - 2.1.1. Sponsor *Alabama Mosaic* [www.alabamamosaic.org](http://www.alabamamosaic.org), in cooperation with Auburn University Libraries, as a web portal supporting access to digitized Alabama history materials.

*Assure Access to Historical Alabama Resources, continued*

- 2.1.2 Encourage Alabama repositories to contribute digital materials to *Alabama Mosaic* by helping develop digital collection plans and by providing training to support local digitization programs.
  - 2.1.2.1 Sponsor training to assure that librarians, archivists, and others attain the knowledge and skills to successfully plan, initiate, and complete digitization projects.
  - 2.1.2.2 Continue strategies to add digitized resources to *Alabama Mosaic* that are relevant to the *Alabama Social Studies Course of Study* and *Alabama Moments*.
  - 2.2.2.3 Seek opportunities to promote the use of Alabama Mosaic, especially use by K-12 teachers and students.
- 2.1.3 Sponsor the Alabama Digital Preservation Network, a distributed, low-cost model to manage, preserve, and store digital resources harvested from all types of Alabama repositories.
  - 2.1.3.1 Promote the importance of preserving digital resources to the academic community, state agencies, and other cultural heritage organizations.
  - 2.1.3.2 Sustain the LOCKSS-based archival storage network to support the archival needs of repositories of different types and sizes.
  - 2.1.3.3 Encourage additional repositories to join the Alabama Digital Preservation Network.
- 2.2 New Digital Publications: NAAL will continue partnerships to create digital publications related to Alabama, such as the *Encyclopedia of Alabama* (Alabama Humanities Foundation) and *This Goodly Land*, an online literary map of Alabama (Alabama Center for the Book) to further enrich the information available through *Alabama Mosaic*.
- 2.3 Funding: NAAL will seek external funding to support efforts to digitize historical materials and make them accessible electronically through *Alabama Mosaic*.
- 2.4 Improve Access to State Publications: NAAL will develop a plan to expand access to state publications and assure online publications are available electronically by coordinating efforts to promote seamless access to electronic state publications.
- 2.5 Digital Preservation: NAAL will support the Library of Congress initiative encouraging each state to "work toward the effective preservation of information in digital formats" especially the long-term preservation of state publications and records.

### **3. COORDINATE SHARING OF ACADEMIC LIBRARY RESOURCES**

- 3.1 Resource Sharing: NAAL will coordinate sharing library materials and encourage the use of appropriate processes and technology among NAAL participants to assure that students, faculty, and other researchers can obtain needed information regardless of where it is held.
- 3.2 New Technologies: NAAL will investigate new initiatives that improve or extend library and information services to authorized users and other researchers.
  - 3.2.1 Continue efforts to implement a statewide unmediated borrowing program that would allow students and faculty to request items directly from an owning library and to borrow materials on-site from participating NAAL member libraries.
  - 3.2.2 Investigate appropriate technologies that support unmediated borrowing for adoption by libraries participating in an unmediated borrowing program.
  - 3.2.3 Seek external funding to support the acquisition of new technology, if needed, to support unmediated borrowing.

### **4. DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS TO EXPAND ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

- 4.1 Alabama Virtual Library: NAAL will support partnerships with the Alabama Commission on Higher Education, Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education, Alabama Public Library Service, Alabama State Department of Education, and Alabama Supercomputer Authority to strengthen and expand the Alabama Virtual Library resources and services.
- 4.2 Affiliate Institutions Program: NAAL will coordinate the Affiliate Institutions Program to enable Alabama's accredited, non-profit, four-year colleges not eligible for NAAL membership to share online databases, participate in continuing education activities, and engage in joint planning for increasingly technology-based delivery of library services and resources.
- 4.3 HBCU Library Alliance: NAAL will encourage and support efforts by the Alabama Historically Black Colleges and Universities participating in the national HBCU Library Alliance to forge cooperative programs that will strengthen their resources and services.
- 4.4 University of Alabama School of Library and Information Service: To help offset the predicted shortage of librarians, NAAL will seek opportunities to recruit individuals to become professional librarians in academic libraries.
- 4.5 Alabama History and Culture: NAAL will support partnerships with the Encyclopedia of Alabama coalition and the Alabama Center for the Book to encourage an appreciation of Alabama's history and culture.
- 4.6 Alabama Historical Records Board: NAAL will participate in the Alabama Historical Records Board by maintaining an appointment to the board as described in the State of Alabama Act No. 2006-160.

## **5. IMPROVE LIBRARY ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE**

- 5.1 Assessment: NAAL will coordinate data collection and program evaluation to assist its members in developing effective and efficient library programs.
  - 5.1.1 Collect, collate, and distribute annual statistical data about academic libraries.
    - 5.1.1.1 Facilitate the collection of statistical data about academic libraries for the biennial Academic Library Survey compiled by the National Center for Education Statistics.
    - 5.1.1.2 Collect annual statistical data about academic libraries in the years these data are not collected by the National Center for Education Statistics.
  - 5.1.2 Collect and evaluate data on the use of online resources to assure the most effective licensing models and expenditures for online information products licensed by NAAL.
  - 5.1.3 Encourage use of the *LibQual+* library services assessment results to publicize library accountability and user satisfaction with academic library resources and services.
  - 5.1.4 Collect other management information, as needed, to monitor progress and performance of NAAL programs or to provide baseline data for planning future programs.
- 5.2 Enhancing Skills: NAAL will sponsor programs to enhance and strengthen the skills of library staff to ensure the provision of excellent library and information services in Alabama academic libraries.